

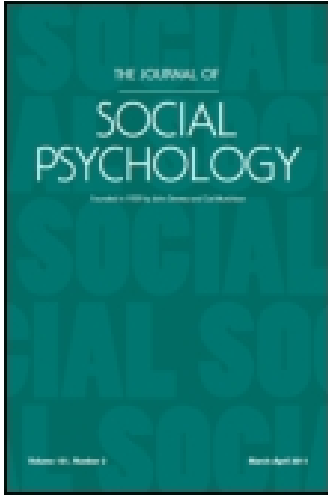
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SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL HYPOTHESES ON NAZI GERMANY: IV*

New York City

PAUL KECSKEMETI AND NATHAN LEITES

A. RATIONALISM AND IRRATIONALISM

Thought and behavior patterns which may be termed "rationalist" are in the compulsive character found side by side with "irrationalist" ones; "the most incisive logic dwells . . . (together) with a . . . magical illogically" (8). This character structure is shot through with superstitions, but also shows "a great dislike for muddled thinking" (18), "a passion for lucidity of thought" (18), "in some cases a capacity for abstract logical thinking which goes far beyond the average" (29). The polarization between rationalism and irrationalism is illustrated by the pedantry which the compulsive character tends to show in the choice of words. In some cases, this pedantry is related mainly to beliefs in the magic "virtue" of some words; in others, to intense concern for consistency in language and "a fondness for intellectual exactitude" (18). It may also be due to a desire to get at the "essence" of things by using the "right" word; the "right" definition of certain terms commands passionate interest.

"Rationalism" and "irrationalism" are vague terms themselves. They are used here to designate a set of psychologically related thought and action patterns. Thus certain "advanced" modes of thought and behavior may be called "rationalistic," while "archaic" modes of thought and action may be called "irrationalistic." Furthermore, thinking shall be said to be "rationalistic" if it is guided by the principle that beliefs ought to be held only if they correspond to facts accessible to everyone, as well as to "generally valid" modes of deduction. "Irrational" thinking, on the other hand, admits beliefs based upon facts which are found only in exceptional experience, and upon modes of deduction which cannot be shown to be "generally valid."

In German culture, fully developed "rationalistic" and "irrationalistic" thought and action patterns were rather strikingly found side by side. Positive science, "objectivity," "sober realism" were highly valued. Fact state-

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ments were considered incontrovertible if presented as "wissenschaftlich festgestellt." A widespread German conception of German character attributed high "objectivity" and a "fanatical love of truth" to it. On the other hand, there was high vogue of "freak theories" of all kinds, as well as a strong "romantic" tendency not to take facts for granted. There was much preoccupation with the grounds on which scientific findings are held, i.e., with epistemology. Epistemological speculation usually was concerned with finding a better ground for holding beliefs than the mere general accessibility of facts. These "higher" grounds for belief usually turned out to be discoverable only by a mental effort of which only the select few were held to be capable.

In German scientific discussion, one often encountered high preoccupation with the terms employed, the methods of investigation to be applied, etc. There was a tendency to be elaborate on definitions, which were very frequently regarded as true or false rather than convenient or inconvenient. This does not mean that the definitions employed were highly precise. On the contrary, the range of permissible neologisms was high; and they were usually sufficiently closely connected with terms of common usage to produce a high vagueness of meaning. One may recall in this context that the striving of compulsion neurotics to be precise in their formulations is frequently merely apparent: "The patients frequently cannot tell what it is that their compulsions demand of them. The compulsions often . . . have a . . . vague . . . quality" (8). Correspondingly, elaborate "clarifications of terms" in German scientific discussions often had the result that the terms were declared to be clear only to those who have the necessary power of intuition; or it was admitted that they cannot be clear because the objects treated are of an "undefinable," "enigmatic" character: "Geheimnisvoll," "unergründlich," "im Tiefsten unfassbar," etc. "Our emotions . . . end by adducing their very nebulousness as proof . . . of their genuineness" (6). This is presumably a special case of the compulsive character's antagonistic tendencies towards vagueness and precision. Beliefs of this kind may be related to the enigmatic nature of compulsion, of "inner life" where the level of repression is high, and of arbitrary authorities. The resultant ontology is one which represents "reality" as an object arranged in depth, the penetration of which becomes progressively more difficult and necessarily leaves a residue resisting analysis; the opposite view is deprecated as "flacher Rationalismus" or "Positivismus." The deeper the penetration, the less one can rely on "reason," "logic," or "Geist" (as against "intuition" and "Seele"). Such views involve a low estimate of quantification as a means

of knowledge; on the other hand German culture, as is well known, contains intense quantification tendencies.

The compulsive character tends to treat "abstract" terms—and he is apt to put "emphasis on abstract conceptions" (8)—with little reference to the "concrete" terms by which they are ostensibly defined (8). Corresponding attitudes, doubtlessly, were widely diffused in German culture: one may recall the vogue of "idealistic" metaphysics, and the rôle of the term "Begriff" in philosophy and everyday speech—"im Begriffe sein"—where it frequently refers to real events rather than terms. This may be related to the tendency of the compulsive character to invest words with high emotional charges and to attribute high potency to them. One may recall that "many" compulsive neurotics have "retreated from the world of feeling into the world of concepts . . . (or) even farther into the world of words . . . (they show) a displacement of psychic weight from . . . impulses to . . . a word" (8).

German culture shows many indications of a high cathexis level of words. One may mention the proliferation and rôle of distinctive vocabularies of various groups of specialists; and more or less conscious beliefs in the potency of words.

As a reaction-formation, one found philosophies demanding a "return to the things themselves" ("zu den Sachen selbst"—E. Husserl), and a direct "vision" ("Schau") unimpeded by verbal mediators. In such contexts language tends to appear as unavoidable as well as inadequate: there is a high incidence of attempt "to penetrate behind things . . . to an inexpressible something and to express this something in . . . language" (6). This double relationship to words is even more manifest in characteristic attitudes towards music: music is frequently sought so that one may be "released from the pressure of speech"; but "people (in Germany) are always trying to find some literary interpretation" for music (6).

One factor contributing to the "anti-logical" aspect of German "irrationalism" is the pervasive presence of "unresolved contradictions" in widespread German character structures. This may be related to the prominent rôle of ambivalence in the impulse structure of the compulsive character, and to the prevalence of reaction-formations—characterized by incompleteness and instability—in its defence system. The behavior of compulsion neurotics is "on the whole somewhat contradictory" (8).

Such constellations are frequently accompanied in German culture by an awareness of "having two souls in one's breast" ("zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust"). Widely held theories concerning the "two Germanies" may be related to this.

There was a high diffusion of ontologies stressing "tragic tensions" ("tragische Spannungen"), "unsolvable conflicts" ("unlösbare Gegensätze"), and the like. People who held ontologies which "gloss over" these alleged discrepancies, were apt to be characterized as "shallow optimists." Intermediate ("Zwischen") attitudes were apt to be despised as such.

However, the opposite tendency of "mediating" between opposites also existed and at times became predominant. Such "synthetic" types of theory frequently denied the applicability of formal logic and adopted a "dialectical" method which was said to be better adapted to the "contradictory" structure of the world. In fact, from an ordinary "logical" viewpoint many of the syntheses proposed would appear inadmissible. Many key terms have vague and rich implicit definitions containing elements felt to be antagonistic. E. Diesel (6) asks characteristically: "What is Hanseatum? Like all German concepts ending in 'tum,' it is a fusion of many and varied elements." (It may be recalled, in this connection, that in compulsion neuroses many symptoms in the course of time acquire a significance opposite to their original one which they also retain.)

One of the characteristic varieties of "irrationalism" in the compulsive character is wishful thinking, i.e., the admission (rejection) of fact statements with little evidence, because they correspond (do not correspond) to a state of things which is desired. This character type exhibits a "possibility of 'wishing away' an undesired piece of reality—the ability to deny reality opposed to instinctual wishes" (8). One often encountered in German culture the assertion that a fact statement is valid if it is a moral duty to promote the fact in question, or if the belief in this fact statement facilitates dutiful action. Where such thought patterns are prevalent, there will be a tendency to conclude that anyone who asserts a fact *wishes* that fact to be true, that is to say, that people who assert uncomfortable facts are wicked. During World War II, the conception apparently was widespread among German soldiers that it was a moral duty to predict German victory. German prisoners, when interrogated as to their expectations of victory, often replied that "as a German soldier," it was their duty to expect it. As the Army Bulletin for Enlisted Men (Mitteilungen für die Truppe No. 313, March 1944) put it: "Belief in victory . . . is a decision of our will" ("Der Glaube an den Sieg ist . . . ein Entschluss unseres Willens"). Thus, acceptance or rejection of factual beliefs came under the sphere of "norm-oriented" behavior.

"If one could not believe that such and such a thing is true, one could not go on any longer," was another frequent theme in German communica-

tions. It is as if one could keep going only as long as one believed that certain value statements have an equivalent among facts. Obviously, activity in general would not be possible without certain favorable assumptions about facts being held implicitly. The presumably distinctive trait in German culture is the high degree of explicitness with which such assumptions were held, an explicitness probably indicating strong underlying doubts.

One may further recall in the context of "wishful thinking" the German stereotype about the German propensity towards "Träumerei." Open rebellions against facts in the "das-kann-nicht-sein" vein, or in that of "eine Wendung muss ja kommen, denn so kann es nicht weitergehen" are frequent. (These phrases were often used by German Second World War soldiers clinging to optimistic prognoses.) One may also refer to the incidence of phantastic beliefs with a "scientific" basis about events which "jede Einbildungskraft übersteigen," such as "secret weapon" beliefs in 1943-44.

As to metaphysical assertions on the "meaningfulness" or "meaninglessness" of events, ambivalent attitudes were also current in German culture. The experience in which events—more or less consciously appear as "meaningless" was presumably frequent. This experience is characteristic of compulsive personalities in relation with their tendencies towards depression and tension, and to feelings of impotence (everything is "in vain," "zwecklos," "vergeblich"). As a reaction-formation, however, there are beliefs that there is a "deeper meaning" in everything, even in every ostensibly pointless detail of events; or it may be asserted that such a deeper meaning, though unknown, "must" exist. (This is sometimes related to "wishful thinking": thus, Goebbels frequently used the argument that history would be "meaningless" if Germany were to be defeated; history, however, "cannot" be "meaningless"; hence Germany will win.) "Meaninglessness," on the other hand, sometimes appeared as the criterion of "higher" reality; one may recall certain theological systems based on the concept of "das ganz Andere" (K. Barth), and E. Jünger's dictum concerning the value of sacrifice "am Rande der Sinnlosigkeit dargebracht."

The theory and practice of National Socialism displayed the polarity of rationalism and irrationalism to a remarkable degree.

The "irrationalist" side of National Socialism is well known. It repudiated the conception of neutral, generally accessible facts, and postulated a system of beliefs ultimately based upon desires entertained by a group. Certain fundamental theorems of Nazism were said to be beyond factual control. "Will" and "character" were said to be superior to the intellect.

On the other hand, National Socialism also had a "rationalistic" side. Its

conception of power especially was "tough-minded." According to a major Nazi view it is "meaningless" to say that something is "wrong" if we can get away with it. Nazis usually had nothing but contempt for politicians, both in and outside Germany, who limited their calculations of possible actions by "moral" considerations, e.g., involving legality; only "hard facts" ought to influence behavior. (This "realism" which claimed to be "rational" was in one respect at least "irrational," since its adherents were apt to overlook the fact that value considerations influence behavior.)

Nazi religious speculation was also frequently characterized by a kind of "rationalism." Nazi criticisms of the Christian religious tradition to a large extent repeated the "rational" arguments of popularized "enlightenment." The religious doctrines put forward by the Nazis lacked a rich emotional background; they remained within a circle of "rational" dogmas (such as the eternity and absolute value of "The People.") Trying to base religious practice upon a famous misunderstanding of the origin of religion, they invented certain rites which were allegories of natural phenomena (such as the equinox or the solstice). Since this kind of religious experience is emotionally thin, it dares not get away from alleged scientific "facts." On the other hand, of course, these dogmas lack scientific spirit, and to that extent are "irrational."

B. INDIVIDUALIZING AND GENERALIZING ATTITUDES

Tendencies towards "generalizing" attitudes are characteristic of the compulsive character; one may recall that frequently "the (unconscious) content of an obsession is taken out of its special connections by a process of generalization" (11). There is a propensity to think in terms of types ("Typisierung"). False generalizations from a small number of cases are frequently encountered.

In German culture, there was a significant polarization in characterizing events. There was a strongly developed "generalizing" attitude which treated each object as the representative of a class of objects and each event merely as an instance of a general law. On the other hand, however, there was stress on the opposite attitude which consists in taking each object and event as a unique individuality, not to be related relevantly to any generalization. Such "individualizing" attitudes are in the compulsive character presumably to a considerable extent reaction-formations against "generalization" tendencies.

Recent German philosophy has repeatedly dealt with the two attitudes. Thus H. Rickert established an influential distinction between two kinds of

sciences; "nomothetic" ones, which employ mainly the generalizing method, and "idiographic" ones which primarily use the individualizing one. According to Rickert, the method most appropriate to the natural sciences is the nomothetic one, while the idiographic method is more congenial to the cultural sciences. This corresponds to the conception that the "higher" an object is, the less it can be subsumed under general laws; cultural objects are "higher" than natural ones. These and related methodological questions were much meditated upon in German intellectual circles, e.g., the question whether "man" can be treated "nomothetically," i.e., be the object of a natural science. According to the more generally accepted view, he cannot.

Nazism tended somewhat to reverse this usual distribution of rôles between the nomothetic and the idiographic method. Certain Nazi ideologies rejected the explanation of nature in merely "nomothetic" terms, and stressed the uniqueness of natural phenomena. With regard to man, however, they adopted a "generalizing" attitude, which treated each individual primarily as the representative of a—unique—"popular" or "racial" group. "This deviation from the recent tradition is easily explained: exact science with its mathematical structure was too "rational" and mistrusted for this reason: the "idiographic" method was preferred as "intuitive" and uncontrollable. The human individual, however, cannot be allowed to benefit from an "idiographic" treatment which would render justice to his uniqueness, because this might lead to anti-totalitarian implications.

Language indicators of the individualizing attitude are prominently used adjectives stressing the uniqueness of objects, such as "unerhört," "beispiellos," "noch nie dagewesen," "einmalig," "einzigartig," "ausserordentlich." The first three of these examples had a very ambivalent emotional tone; they may express admiration, but also great indignation at some event; the others were mostly used in a highly laudatory sense. Compounds formed with the term "sonder," which also expresses an exceptional quality, mostly had a commendatory tone. The latitude for the permissible creation of neologisms fostered the individualizing tendency.

"Generalizing" attitudes, however, were also widespread. One may recall the tendency of subjects to look upon themselves as representatives of some valued group. Furthermore, in action-oriented discourse things were frequently "reduced to a law" (thus diminishing their threatening character), or analyzed in terms of a "principle" ("auf ihre prinzipielle Bedeutung hin").

C. WITHDRAWAL AND SUBMERSION

Separation from the world, the tendency to retire to one's "inner sanctum," is often found in compulsive persons; and as a reaction formation against this, strong tendencies towards identification with others. These two contrary tendencies may be combined: the compulsive individual may identify himself with his group, and then create an abyss between the group and the rest of the world.

Various manifestations of the compulsive tendency towards separation from the world have been noted. Thus, K. Abraham (1) observed the "inaccessibility" of the compulsive character. E. Jones (18) has stressed the compulsive character interest in the idea of "centrality," which may be related to a very high valuation of, and attention to, one's own subjective events. This may, in turn induce self-dramatization or pompous ("portentous") behavior. As a reaction formation against this, one encounters demonstrative factualness ("Sachlichkeit").

K. Abraham (1) also noted the compulsive character's "high sensitiveness to external encroachments." E. Jones (18) speaks of "undue sensitiveness to interference." "When . . . interferences . . . take place, the subject's reaction . . . is one of resentment . . . on occasion . . . extreme rage" (18). Freud in his initial essay mentioned "obstinacy" as a trait of the "anal character."

The high valuation of the "inner" as against the "outer" world may express itself in a certain indifference towards one's outward behavior since it may be held to be impossible adequately to exteriorize the full riches of inner experience.

Another manifestation of the high valuation of the isolated self is that the compulsive character "often believes that he is a unique person" (1). He may vehemently reject uniformity, and "despise any activity which (he would) have to share with other people" (1). As a counterpart to this there are intense strivings towards uniformity which may be explained by many factors; e.g., a painful feeling of isolation which is the reverse side of elated feelings of uniqueness; guilt and fear of punishment for deviations from the general rule; a diffuse sense of danger; tendencies towards doubts and indecision. Compulsive "orderliness" values uniformity for its own sake.

Compulsive isolation from the world generally results in low empathy (the subject lacks the "intuitive" capacity of assessing other people's subjective events), and in a certain lack of spontaneous sympathy for others

(related, among other factors, to anal parsimony and to destructive tendencies.) "Altruistic" acts are rather the results of the conscious "fulfillment of a duty" than of a sympathetic urge to help. Various kinds of "egoism," on the other hand, may be buttressed by general norms: the subject simply can't help it, he must seek his own advantage, since this is demanded by the most imperative moral norms, or by the most justified self-interest (e.g., by helping another person, the subject would be "dragged into an unpleasant affair"; this cannot be demanded of him). Justifications of "egoistic" action may command ruthlessness in inflicting great deprivations on others, for the sake of comparatively small indulgences for oneself. Such characteristic instrumental attitudes towards others may reaction-formatively in their turn call forth symbols of the type exemplified by one of the formulations of Kant's categorical imperative: thou shalt not treat thy neighbor as a means to an end.

Ruthlessness will be greatest where the individual acts in the name of a group and the infliction of deprivations on outsiders compensates for the deprivations imposed by the group on its individual member.

A far-reaching isolation of the subject from the world, and an intense identification with the group, were widely encountered in German culture. "Innerlichkeit" and "Gemeinschaft" were terms designating central values. Both terms cover considerable ranges of signification.

"Innerlichkeit" stands, in the first place, for a certain self-sufficiency of the subject's consciousness: satisfaction is sought in "inner" experiences for which the concurrence of no outside object is needed. In other cases, "Innerlichkeit" may mean that, although an outward object exists, the main accent is on the "depth" of the subject's experience of it. In still other cases, emphasis may be put on the productive side of "Innerlichkeit": the subject feels a creative force in himself, and strives to produce a work which expresses his "Innerlichkeit."

"Gemeinschaft," on the other hand, denotes, in the first place a community the members of which are very close together, so that their relations are thoroughly personalized (contrasting with "Gesellschaft," a type of group the members of which are kept together by some impersonal relationship.) One of the most important Nazi emphases, as is well known, was that on the "Volk" or "Volksgemeinschaft,"—a group which includes all Germans, but which also supposedly has all the characteristics of a "Gemeinschaft" such as the family. Thus, the individual German was expected to "lose" or "submerge" his identity in the "Volksgemeinschaft." This appeal tried to capitalize on spontaneous tendencies in German culture whose mani-

festations are well known. One may mention, as an instance, "the enormous popularity of singing in German walking clubs" which "seems to be based on . . . (the) 'engendering of a common heart beat' (Tacitus) . . ." (6).

A certain oscillation between the poles of "Innerlichkeit" and "Gemeinschaft" could frequently be observed. It may be in part explained by typical male middle class career lines. After his submersion in the family, the adolescent breaks out and creates a world of "Innerlichkeit" all for himself. Soon he may be attracted by new types of "Gemeinschaft" in which new objects exercise authority in place of the father. These new types of "Gemeinschaft" may be juvenile leagues or "cliques" (gangs), or the army. In later life, both the passion for "Innerlichkeit" and for "Gemeinschaft" subside, but both urges remain, tuned in a lower key. The adult or elderly individual develops a strong insistence on "privacy" ("Privatleben"); but he also may retain a fondness for certain forms of community life, such as his "Verein," or his veterans' league. Feelings of "Innerlichkeit" may be cultivated within the religious or national "Gemeinschaft."

At both poles between which the individual oscillates, there is fear: submerged in the "Gemeinschaft," the individual fears losing himself; having retired within the magic circle of "Innerlichkeit," he fears losing contact with the world. Both fears are marked in German culture. While "solitude" is closely associated with "greatness" in the standard image of the "Genie," psychologists observing German soldiers in World War II noted a high intolerance of solitude. The Nazis skillfully exploited widespread German fears of being "cut off from" or deserting the "popular community." Pro "Wir" ideologies were, consciously, or unconsciously, polemical against the strivings of the "Ich," or of a smaller "Wir." This was presumably to a significant extent the case for German nationalism. "The German is not born (sic) with the feeling, which is the Englishman's birthright, that he is a part of the nation and the rest of the nation is fundamentally similar to himself . . . their (the Germans') national unity . . . has not yet become a part of their inmost being" (6). There is a variety of indicators for the partly reaction-formative nature of German nationalism against individualism and localism-regionalism. Firstly, there was the high emphasis on one's cathexis of the nation: "it is no mere chance that Germans are so fond of talking about their 'most sacred' possessions" (6). Secondly, the high incidence of speculation on the theory of the nation "as such": "people are never tired of asking whether a nation is a community held together by fate or by necessity or by a sense of values or what not . . . in order, it is sup-

posed, 'to strengthen the foundations of German nationality for the maintenance of its national character' " (6). Thirdly, a high ambiguity in the characterization of the German nation: "Nothing is more difficult than to say what the concept Fatherland connotes" (6).

Fears of loss of identification were a sign of low genuine "gregariousness." Many Germans were "easily led," it was easy to organize them for certain purposes, because they felt their ties with the community to be tenuous. They were mortally afraid (not necessarily consciously) of losing contact with groups; and were grateful to someone whose clear commands counteracted this fear. Uniforms made them happy in part because they were visible proof of their not being alone.

There was, however, also the opposite feat of losing one's personal sphere ("individuality"). It was thus easy to organize many Germans, but only for certain purposes, connected with collective "defense"; that is to say, by taking advantage of the intense fear of interference by, and surrender to, the outside. The individual easily merged in the group if he could attribute these fears to the group and look to it for protection against them. Thus penetration of the group by alien elements (*Über fremdung*) came to be especially feared. There was great concern for the maintenance of the group's own, separate essence (*Eigenwesen, Sonderwesen*; the Nazis have coined the phrase "selbsteigene Sonderheit"). Conversely, the prefixes "Aus-," "Ausser-," "Fremd-," "Anders-," etc., have a highly negative value character. According to a widespread image of German history, Germany had in the past disastrously fallen victim to its propensity for becoming infatuated with alien cultures. E. Diesel expresses this belief in a representative fashion: "Germany is a land without frontiers . . . it straddles out in all directions" (6); "all our great main waterways either originate on alien soil or . . . leave us for other lands. Only the Weser and the Ems belong to us throughout . . ." (6); "the German people appear to be more plastic than any other European nation, quickly influenced . . . and quick to pass from one influence to another" (6); "through the centuries the influence of Europe on Germany has been quite out of proportion to the influence of Germany on Europe" (6). (Beliefs of this kind coexisted with well known beliefs in Germany as the originator of most of European "Kultur.")

Within their "private" sphere which they are careful to delimit, many Germans are constantly on the alert to keep out ("sich vom Leibe halten") undue interference ("ich will meine Ruhe haben," "das kann ich mir doch nicht gefallen lassen," "wie kommt er dazu," etc.). The individual likes to think of himself as an autonomous system which has come into being, and

is functioning, with a minimum of help from the outside. Such beliefs co-exist with opposite beliefs in dependence on authorities whose interferences are widely accepted.

Besides being "autonomous," the individual also liked to think of himself as being "unique." "Sometimes one is tempted to think that every educated German feels himself to be a genius" (6). (The somewhat detached German author who makes this point states however (6) also: "The ordinary German is a less commonplace person than the average citizen of other lands.") Such beliefs are probably to a considerable extent defenses against apprehensions of uniformity or formlessness, and emptiness: Germans are engaged in a "perpetual effort to acquire . . . (a) distinctive character" (6).

"Uniqueness" is held to be responsible for certain difficulties in communication. "Verschlossenheit" and reactively "Aufgeschlossenheit" are highly charged. There are frequent references to "undescribable" experiences, or feelings which cannot be expressed by words or acts.

German intellectuals like to use highly personal, private languages which hinder communication; they will insist that the exact shade of thought they have in mind cannot be expressed in any other way. "The German language rather seems to blush in public" (6). This is one of the ways in which "Innerlichkeit" manifests itself. (Frequently, such beliefs are accompanied by presentations of the self as deprived by an uncomprehending environment.)

Accordingly, there is much speculation about the problem of "personality," "individuality," the "incomparable and unique" essence of the person. "Germans are inclined to think they have a soul whereas other nations have not" (6). According to a widespread German belief the variety of personality-structures within German culture is higher than outside it. Even the moderate E. Diesel (6) expresses this myth quaintly: "The distinction of the German rivers is the . . . variety of their 'personalities'. . . . The rivers of other countries often seem to have less variety than the German streams."

"Person" and "thing" are felt to be sharp opposites. "Unique" is a high value term, whereas "gemein" (literally nothing worse than "common") expresses the most radical condemnation. The Nazis, although more directly interested in "Gemeinschaft" within Germany, took over the cult of "Innerlichkeit," as to the relations between Germany and the world. One may cite a representative passage by Wilhelm Kicherer in the *Mülhauser Tagblatt* of August 26, 1944: "Our rich inner life has prevented us from becoming standard types like the Russians or Americans." Denunciations of the "mass" by writers developing the ideas of Le Bon (e.g., Ortega y Gasset) found a ready public in German. The opposite tendency towards "Gemein-

schaft"—although, as shown, it frequently coalesces with "Innerlichkeit" tendencies—tended on the other hand to lead to radical anti-individualism.

Uniqueness feelings tended, of course, to be concentrated on the collective self in addition to, or instead of, the individual self. The dogma of the uniqueness of "Deutschtum" had a high place in recent German nationalism. The alleged incomparability of Germany tended to be regarded as a major value in itself. The presentation of the individual self, with its incommunicable uniqueness, as a "verkanntes Genie" was paralleled by the presentation of the collective self as a misunderstood world martyr.

Low empathy, a compulsive trait noted above, is presumably very often found in German culture. "Conversation in Germany is often made difficult by insufficient appreciation of the . . . other person's thoughts" (6). Many Second World War soldiers in the occupation armies found it impossible to understand why they were disliked. Germans often failed to judge aggressions committed by them as such, and hence were apt to consider defence or counter-aggression on the part of others as unprovoked aggression (cf. the widespread dismayed puzzlement during the Second World War why Britain "attacked" the Reich, or why the Allies would not "make peace"). There was often a dim awareness of one's deficiencies in understanding others, and compensatory efforts at "Menschenkenntnis" and "Auslandskunde," as well as an emphasis on the rôle of "imponderables."

"Altruism" and "egoism" in German culture often show the compulsive characteristics noted above. Altruistic behavior based on norms, and egoistic behavior justified by norms, seems to be highly frequent as against spontaneous sympathy or impulsive egoism. Egoism buttressed by a facade of morality often showed a "ruthless" character. Guilt about instrumental attitudes towards others found expression in professions of general anti-instrumentalism: "Deutsch sein heisst etwas um seiner selbst willen tun."

D. OMNIPOTENCE AND IMPOTENCE

The compulsive character tends to show a certain polarization between the sense of, and demand for omnipotence, and the sense and acceptance of impotence. The following factors are among those which account for this:

1. Fixation on, and regression to certain anal experiences. "A strong desire for power may be derived from the sense of power that accompanies the control of the sphincters" (8). Feelings of irresistible power may also arise in connection with infantile excretory acts, and products when there is "no need to resist" the "overwhelmingness" of the emotions involved, whether of love, hate or fear (33). Power may, furthermore, be intensely

desired to ward off parental encroachments. The sadistic tendencies which according to K. Abraham are characteristic of the "later anal phase" (the fixation-regression point of the compulsive character) are mainly concerned with the control of objects (1).

2. Compulsion experiences. On the one hand, "the sense of irresistibility in the compulsion . . . its overwhelming intensity" (23) may foster feelings of omnipotence. On the other hand, feelings of impotence may arise when the subject suffers from the merciless, inexorable impact of obsessions and compulsions. As a reaction to this, one may again encounter omnipotence tendencies.

3. A male child identifying with a patriarchal father may have feelings of impotence, as he accepts the picture of the world laid down by the father in which the child is assigned a lowly place. He may develop reaction-formations against this and strive to reassure himself by the exercise of power. He may also feel at one with the strong father, and thus develop feelings of omnipotence.

(It may be added that mother identifications conducive to a certain type of latent homosexuality may lead to a certain type of demand for power; thus, one type of German officer in the Second War was quite conscious of the fact that one of the main attractions of his vocation was "the beauty of having younger people under one's care.")

4. Feelings of, and strivings for, omnipotence may arise as protections in connection with a high sense of danger, according to the motto expressed in the German dictum "Der Schwächere ist immer der Dumme." Whatever is outside of the person's control may then come to be viewed as potentially dangerous. In the "all or nothing" fashion of this character type *any*, even a tiny, non-conformity of an object to the demands made upon it may acquire the significance of *total* recalcitrance; if the object is permitted to get away with it, the incident becomes an indication of the *total* powerlessness of the self vis-a-vis that object; hence, of the highly dangerous nature of the object. This is alluded to in the dictum "wer nicht für mich ist, ist gegen mich." When finally an object gets subjected to control, fears of revenge and rebellion may arise, provoking added strivings for increased protective power. This vicious circle is one of the factors behind the "insatiability" of the demand for power in persons of this type.

There are in German culture important trends presenting man as utterly impotent vis-a-vis a variety of Higher Powers, mundane and metaphysical (15). "Schlechtsinnige Abhängigkeit," "Auf-Gnade-und-Ungnade-ausgeliefert-sein" are characteristically used terms. Thus there is a frequent undercurrent

of suspicion concerning the effectiveness of the protective acts engaged in. All manners of events tend to be regarded as "Gegebenheiten." This comprises the following attitudes:

(a) Little attention is given to the explanation and evaluation of such events. Both questions appear as irrelevant, and, as it were, irreverent. That is, there is high deference to "Tatsächlichkeit" as such, fostering, among other things, the expedience of "fait accompli" techniques.

(b) The events involved appear as entirely or nearly unmodifiable by any action of the person, i.e., as "Naturereignisse" or, if they are severely deprivational, as "Naturkatastrophen": "daren lässt sich eben nichts ändern," "dagegen können wir nicht an." There is often not so much a fear of punishment if "resistance" were offered, as an awe-filled conviction of the impossibility of making a dent, and of self-destruction by the mere shock of trying ("den Schädel gegen die Wand einrennen").

As to omnipotence beliefs in German culture, one major category refers to *bigness*. Frequent use is made of, and high emotional charge attached to, terms like "gigantisch," "ganz gross," "riesengross," "grossartig," "unermesslich," "ungeheuer," "gewaltig," "wuchtig," and prefixes like "gross-" and "Welt-." The Nazi application of symbols of bigness to Germany (and groups within it) is too well known to need elaboration. Apart from this, there is a tendency to locate present group activities in vast spatial (global) and temporal ("welthistorisch") contexts.

Closely related are the "Faustian" symbols of *illimitedness* which stand in contrast to the characteristic fear of bodily constraint. One may recall the rôle of terms like "unendlich," "endlos," "uneingeschränkt," "unbeschränkt," "unbegrenzt," "grenzenlos." Fears of limitedness ("Einkreisung," "Volk ohne Raum") and strivings towards illimitedness have presumably been factors significantly contributing to expansionist tendencies.

Furthermore, strivings for complete "*freedom*" of action play a considerable rôle. Any degree of "dependence" upon the outside world—even on a give and take basis—was frequently felt as intolerable, inducing feelings of anxiety, humiliation, constraint (lack of freedom). (This is, of course, the supplement—by virtue of such mechanisms as displacement—to the high acceptance of high dependence on one's own authorities. A situation in which the group can afford absolutely to ignore outside wishes is then considered as the only one consistent with "dignity" and "freedom." Thus there are tendencies to attach less importance to the maximum satisfaction of needs than to the possibility of satisfying them without having to depend on outsiders. An illustration of this point is furnished by the wide emo-

tional appeal of the idea of "autarchy" in German culture. Autarchy was, among other things, valued as a condition of "freedom"; thus, self-sufficiency with regard to food was referred to as "Nahrungsfreiheit."

In such reactions only two conditions are thus admitted to be possible, namely, *complete* "freedom" or *complete* lack of it (another instance of the all-or-nothing pattern). In German culture, as is well known, many individuals entertained and desired relationships of both types with different partners; the identities of these partners are relatively irrelevant—what matters are their generic characteristics making them fit to be targets for the one or the other kind of acts. It was, of course, typical for the character structure here studied to accept complete subordination towards representatives of state authority, as an alleged necessary condition of maximum "freedom" of the state. In so far as the subject identified with "the State," he may have experienced this "freedom" as his own. This pattern (a consciously accepted diminution of one's own rôle, as a necessary condition for the full experience of the greatness of the whole) was often found in the army. If a German soldier referred to himself as "only a little Landser," one unconscious motive may have been that this was a way of emphasizing the overwhelming power of the army with which he identified himself.

Preoccupation with the sovereignty and success of decisions was shown by frequent references to events occurring "according to plan." Nazi presentations of military operations, for instance, stressed initiative, "freedom of decision," "Herren der Lage sein," "Beherrschung des Geschehens," as supreme goals. Losing the initiative ("das Gesetz des Handelns aus der Hand geben"), on the other hand, was frequently described as a supreme evil. Gen. Dittmar once referred to "the freedom of decision" as "das Höchste" (Jan. 4, 1944). During the slow Italian retreat late in 1943, German military authorities made it a point usually to inform a given unit of the point where a stand would be made, so as to make—often successfully—every act of retreat appear as a self-willed achievement. Another Nazi theme belonging to this context was that "nothing is impossible." In a very typical vein Hitler declared (according to *DNB*, July 5, 1944) that German soldiers "das scheinbar Unmögliche möglich machen und auch vor unlösbar scheinenden Aufgaben nicht zurückschrecken, sondern sie am Ende doch meistern."

Closer observation of feelings of omnipotence in German culture shows that they largely belong to two different types: in some cases, overwhelming power appears as gained effortlessly by "magic"; in others, it is felt to be the reward of supreme skill and dogged diligence.

"Magic" feelings of omnipotence can be related to "the omnipotence of his thought . . . feelings . . . wishes," ascribed by Freud to the compulsive character. Also, "words have recaptured their original magical quality": "By the mere verbal statement, the compulsive neurotic's unconscious believes it can coerce reality into pursuing the course stated" (8).

This "magic" type of omnipotence feeling was cultivated by Nazism, by means of such doctrines as that of the "omnipotence" of faith, will power, strength of character, national unity, etc. The following formulations are representative: "If we do not waver in our National Socialist conviction, if we remain pure National Socialists, victory will come as a matter of course." (Gauleiter Erich Koch to leaders of the Hitler Girls' League, 1944). "If one were to calculate coldly, one would say ('der kühle Rechner müsste sagen') that the tasks the farmers have to perform in 1944 are impracticable. However, faith and will are going to overcome all difficulties" (Landesbauernführer Hüber, March 1944). "The might of our enemies can never be greater than our will to master the menace" (Hamburger Fremdenblatt, April 8, 1944).

The prevalence of beliefs in the potency of words, and characteristic beliefs according to which *any* deviation from faith would destroy the *total* effect, may have contributed to the thoroughness with which the Nazis eliminated all unfavorable references from the public (unconsciously, presumably particularly potent) channels of communication; and also to the success of this policy: many Germans felt at liberty to deny the existence of facts which were not recorded in any "authorized" publication. The dismay over hostile utterances in the foreign press, often expressed by Nazi leaders, may have been to some extent sincere.

The second—as usually opposite—type of omnipotence feelings frequently encountered in German culture was connected with the consciousness of supreme skill and effort. "A certain type of efficiency is the highest national ideal" (6). This corresponds to another compulsive trait: the compulsive personality tends to show a "desire for perfection," a "passion for efficiency" (18). This character type strongly prefers, and strives for, "perfectly" skillful acts (for which he engages in much training), and strongly rejects and attempts to avoid plainly unskillful ones (Schlamperei, Stümperei). Often, *any* deviation from perfection is, more or less consciously, believed to induce *complete* inefficiency of action, while sheer perfection is held to guarantee total success. This intolerance towards lower grades of skill may be related to the compulsive "intolerance for waste" (18). "In the unconscious the ideas denoted by the words 'waste' and

'dirty' seem to be synonymous" (18). Correspondingly, in German culture "Verwertung" has a high cathexis. "The German . . . is not content till he has extracted the last ounce of utility from what he is dealing with" (6).

The compulsive character tends to present his acts as highly skillful, in order to avoid censure by a severe super-ego and contempt by others. A compulsive conviction is "that no one else can do the thing in question as well as the subject himself . . . that no one else can be relied upon to do it properly" (18). This evidently furnishes justification for exercising power over others. The wide diffusion of such beliefs in German culture is well known. Their largely reaction-formative nature is indicated, among other things, by the equally widespread German myth that "we Germans" are hypercritical towards the quality of our own performances and hyperindulgent towards that of others. Another indicator of the reaction-formative components in German self-congratulatoriness in the matter of skills is the frequent overt presence of feelings of skill inferiority as against other nations. (The dysphoric impact of this was superficially mitigated by appropriate moral evaluations in favor of Germany.)

Characteristically, compulsive individuals cling to their claim to be recognized as supremely skillful, even when this claim quite manifestly has no foundation in fact. A captured German officer declared this to be a universal German trait: "No German can ever admit he is wrong, and climb down." It is possible that such tendencies have contributed to certain German military set-backs by creating obstacles against the correction of wrong decisions. Thus, the myth of perfection may be an agent of imperfection. A feeling of perfection which is largely reaction-formative will in general be stronger when feelings of inadequacy are aroused by the situation.

In German culture beliefs in the strength of the group were very frequently based on allegations of its high level of skill. Various alleged bases of efficiency were particularly prominent. Firstly, omniscience—a complete diagnosis and prognosis of everything connected with a given action ("vollkommenim Bilde sein").

Secondly, machineries, organizations are supposed to function perfectly ("funktionieren tadellos, ein Wunderwerk deutscher Organisation"). The mastery of advanced technological devices plays a special rôle in such omnipotence fantasies. "Nowhere is faith in technology, as a supernatural being which is . . . omnipotent, as deeply rooted as in the German mind" (St. Galler Tagblatt, June 25, 1944) (20).

Thirdly, beliefs in omnipotence are based on thoroughness, dogged perseverance, concentration in action. All these attributes are highly valued in German culture.

The two kinds of feelings of omnipotence (omnipotence by magic and by skillful action) also appeared in typical conjunctions. Thus Nazi propagandists often spoke of a long period of dogged and inconspicuous effort before the final success in domestic politics or in one of the early campaigns in the war. Success then was brought about "schlagartig" by a sudden, explosive effort, or even without effort, "falling into one's lap like a ripe fruit."

The respective rôles of impotence—and omnipotence—phantasies depend, of course, in part on the situation. Thus, as the Second World War progressed, Nazi propagandists tried increasingly to capitalize upon beliefs in man's subjection to higher powers. But as the situation became quite critical, omnipotence beliefs were again invoked in hinting at a reversal-by-miracle (20).

E. SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONTEMPT

Compulsive characters tend to show intense concern for defence (a term here used roughly in the sense of "prestige" or "respect"), a trait which is related to a variety of factors.

The compulsive character inclines towards self-contempt. There is a "connection between contempt and anal erotism" (18); the "severe superego" of compulsive characters also fosters self-contempt; so does the presence of intense "feminine" tendencies opposed by a "masculine" superego. Submissive attitudes towards authority are a further source.

As a reaction-formation to self-contempt, compulsive persons tend to become demonstratively "pretentious" (1).

Compulsive characters tend to show an intense demand for deference to be granted by others. Various factors contribute to this. Firstly, the above-mentioned tendencies towards self-contempt induce compensatory demands for external supplies of deference. Secondly, compulsive persons show tendencies to transform contempt of self into contempt of others. This, in its turn, may cause the subject to believe that the self is despised by others, and hence to entertain compensatory demands for deference by others. Thirdly, the self-esteem (self-deference) of compulsive persons is *highly* dependent on the deference granted to them by others. The "entire social behavior" of "many" compulsive characters is "determined" by the fact that they "depend on the assurances of other persons to maintain . . . (their) self-esteem" (8). Thus, the "fear of the superego is changed back into . . . social fear," that is to say, there is a "retro-projection" of the superego into reality" (8).

In German culture, attention to the deference aspects of events was high. Any set of objects tended to be characterized prominently in terms of defer-

ence differentials. As for language indicators of this, one may recall the prominent use (figuratively as well as literally) of words like "Geltung" and its compounds such as "Weltgeltung" ("Geltung" has a double meaning of "prestige" and "validity"); "Würde" and "würdig" with manifold compounds, e.g., "ehrwürdig"; "Ehre," "Achtung" (meaning "respect" as well as "attention.") A term designating self-deference as well as consciousness of self is "Selbstbewusstsein." Negative deference terms of prominent use are "Entwürdigung," "Schmach," "Schande" (with compounds, e.g., "der Schandvertrag von Versailles").

The high incidence of deference-rituals, beginning with forms of address, is well known. In the late 1920's "at a Swimming Association Meeting . . . a Round of Honor was swum in memory of those who had fallen in the Great War" (6).

There was a high deference sensitivity, that is to say, the range of events which were experienced as having a bearing upon one's deference status was usually very wide. One may recall the wide figurative use of terms like "frech" and "unverschämt." Thus, many inanimate objects (the weather, or artillery fire) were occasionally called "unverschämt." There was also a high level of doubts concerning one's deference position and much deference-anxiety, i.e., high expectations of deference losses, with intense dysphoric and aggressive reactions. Estimates of deference threats from the environment tended to be exaggerated. "Simple remarks . . . are so often taken amiss . . . to stare at someone is . . . resented as an affront" (6).

In these contexts, German culture showed polarized reactions corresponding to the compulsive reaction patterns outlined above.

Self-contempt was often realized in consciousness and directly expressed, e.g., in phrases of the "ich bin ja nur ein kleiner Landser" type. (This phrase indicated the close relation between self-contempt and submission to authority.) A widespread stereotype taken up by the Nazis imputed to the Germans a lack of self-assurance (Selbstbewusstsein). This, of course served to alleviate guilt about aggression; but it is probably true that blustering and demonstratively self-assured attitudes of Germans were often reaction-formations against an underlying lack of assurance. E. Diesel (6) noted about pre-Nazi Germany: "When he is abroad, the German hovers between the desire to conceal the fact that he is a German and the urge to manifest the fact as clearly as possible." The tendency to identify with exalted models very far removed from the actual conditions of the subject also may be related to self-contempt.

It is furthermore relevant to note in this context that high deference tended

to be attached, in the usual polarized fashion, either almost entirely to a person's socially recognized achievements or group participation, or to an intangible personal essence. Thus there was on the one hand the "verkanntes Genie" type, and on the other (more frequently) the individual who "drags his way through life with, metaphorically speaking, a despatch case of testimonials in his hand" (6). In the process of ascertainment of deference positions a German was typically exposed to "a continuous stream of questions about his profession, his titles, examinations (etc.) . . ." (6). "In Germany . . . the man and his occupation are one and the same thing" (6). As the occupation was so frequently a place in a hierarchy, the person tended to be consciously or unconsciously interested in the preservation of the superior deference positions of those above him in the hierarchy: for the existence of the hierarchy as a whole would appear as dependent on that.

As to demands for deference from others, the subject was expected to pay close attention to the deference aspects of his own acts and of those of the people with whom he had to do. There was a well known tendency to see slights where none were at least consciously intended. It was customary for people strongly to insist upon obtaining the deference they were entitled to; hence frequent complaints about "arrogance" ("Unverschämtheit"). Actions were very frequently oriented with a view to their deference consequences ("welchen Eindruck es machen wird") even at a considerable expense to other values. At the same time such deference scheming behavior was often denied: "Wir haben so was gar nicht nötig. . . ."

In keeping with the emphasis on "protection" in common German character structures, attention was often focused on the prevention of deference losses. Hence attitudes of "being always anxious to keep one's dignity" ("stets darauf bedacht sein, seine Würde zu bewahren"), and especially "one's dignity as a . . . the blank to be filled by any title to deference one may have. Such behavior served to prevent the dreaded situation of "sich blamieren," "sich lächerlich machen." Those who did not protect their deference position strenuously enough were blamed for "nicht genügend auf sich zu halten." One may recall in this connection such presumably widespread traits as portentous seriousness, the atrophy of anti-self humor and irony, and low incidence of histrionic behavior.

An indicator of the high valuation of deference from others was the strong competition for distinctions awarded by authority. German soldiers in the second World War often complained that their officers needlessly sacrificed men in order to be decorated. (Such officers were said to be afflicted with "Ritterkreuzitis").

One of the sources of aggressive behavior was the determination to "win respect" ("Respekt einzuflößen," "sich Achtung zu verschaffen") by ruthless brutality ("Durchgreifen"). There were widespread and frequently conscious beliefs affirming the high efficacy and indispensability of violence as a means of production of deference for the violence user. There was relatively little discrimination between the nuances of deference (including "beliebt sein") based on fear or otherwise grounded; the tendency was to minimize the rôle of the non-fear variants in "political" relations. As such beliefs were projected onto the world at large, there was a tendency to use the deference position of a group as an indicator of its power position in a simple fashion; high (low) deference was held to indicate high (low) power. Thus Second World War German prisoners often concluded from decent treatment given them that Germany must still be very strong; and inferred a high deference position of Germany from her power and its uses.

Many Germans showed an intense desire for deference to them qua Germans from members of outside groups. Thus, German soldiers in the Second World War intensely desired recognition of their "soldierliness" by their adversaries; they also sought to be "accepted," at least to a moderate degree, by certain occupied populations. They tended to react with high satisfaction to the fulfillment of such desires (which were closely allied with desires for affection), and with high dissatisfaction to their frustration.

As to the deference granted to others, there is according to widespread and only partly conscious German beliefs a negative relationship between the amount of deference received from others, and that given to others. Since so many Germans were intensely interested in their deference status, they strenuously avoided giving deference without being obliged to do so ("sich etwas vergeben"); at the same time, they sought to prevent others (especially inferiors in the deference hierarchy) from slipping in their obligations of giving deference (this is the attitude designated as "Distanz wahren"). Contempt of others was fostered not only by the projection of self-contempt but also by the fact that "a conscious attitude of cold contempt . . . (is) held to be a sign of . . . manliness" (6).

As for the deference Germans qua Germans granted to members of outside groups as such, certain polarization tendencies between high deference and contempt were again noticeable, as is well known. Attitudes towards the "West," e.g., were ambivalent: one may recall the high respect for French "refinement" and "elegance," and the contempt for French "decadence," or the conflicting Nazi stereotypes of the British as past masters of "Real-

politik," and as senile pacifists; or again of British "fairness" and British "cant." Germans who came into contact with Western people often expressed admiration for, as well as rage against, their undemonstrative "self-assurance" (Ueberlegenheit). Germans often seemed to themselves "immature" in comparison.

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